



## **DESIGNATION STATUS**

The property is a contributing resource within the Catoctin Furnace National Register Historic District and is listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) district (F-6-45). Additionally, the property is individually listed on the MIHP (F-6-148) and a Maryland Historical Trust easement is held on the property. The property contains the historic house. The nominated property encompasses approximately 0.45 acres of land.

## **SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

The applicant submitted a completed County Register nomination form, the National Register district form, written historical and architectural narratives for the house, a summary of property ownership, and digital photographs.

## **SITE VISITS**

Specific site visit dates were not scheduled for this property since the exterior of the property is always accessible to the public. Commissioners were notified of the pending nomination and encouraged to visit on their own time.

## **REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1) Analysis**

The documentation submitted by the applicant regarding the history and significance of the property clearly establishes the architectural and historical significance of the Forgerman's House, indicating that the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1A), 6B(1D), and 6B(2A). The period of significance for the property is circa 1820 to 1903, the time the house was constructed through the last year the Catoctin Furnace was in operation.

### **2) History Summary**

The Forgerman's House was built between circa 1820-1821. The property is located along the former Frederick-Emmitsburg Turnpike in the village of Catoctin. It is located approximately three miles south of Thurmont.

The nearly half-acre property was built as worker housing for the Catoctin Furnace ironworks. The Catoctin Furnace was an ironworks, first developed by Thomas Johnson, the first governor of Maryland. It was established in 1774 and expanded several times throughout its operation. To accommodate the expansions and need for workers, housing was built south of the furnace. At

the time the Forgerman's House was built, John Brien was the owner of the furnace. The house was most likely built utilizing enslaved Africans. It remained as worker housing until it transferred into private ownership in 1923. The property was purchased by James E. and Minnie F. Nunemaker who owned the property until 1961. It transferred to several owners in the 1960s and 1970s before the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc. purchased the property from Frank V. and Mary R. Cantwell in 2013.

### **3) Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Significance Criteria**

The property is eligible for listing under this category for meeting criteria 6B(1A) and 6B(1D), as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6B(1) of the Frederick County Code:

- 6B(1A): *The property has significant character, interest, or value as part of development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation.*
- 6B(1D): *The property exemplifies cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of county and its communities.*

The property has significant character, interest, and value in the development and heritage of the County and exemplifies cultural, economic, social, and historic heritage of the county and its communities. The property contributes to the Catoctin Furnace Historic District which is a nationally significant district for its association with "American industrial history and industrial archaeology, and its related living quarters, [which] illustrates the growth and development of the iron industry between 1774 and 1904."

The Johnson brothers began operation of the furnace in 1774. By 1803, Baker Johnson obtained sole ownership and expanded the furnace's operation. Per the National Register nomination, following Baker's death in 1811 Catoctin Furnace consisted of several thousand acres of land, the furnace and one stack, the Catoctin Manor house, two warehouses, a chopping mill, a stonemith's shop, barns, stables, a corn house, a charcoal house, a casting house, a forge, and 15 – 20 workers' houses. The Furnace was sold and in 1820 John Brien became the owner. It was during his ownership that the Forgerman's House was most likely built. He expanded the operation by adding a carriage house, an ice house, two mills, and a large garden.

The Furnace produced ammunition for the Continental Army, the Catoctin stove, and other household items. According to the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society Inc.'s website, enslaved labor provided a large part of the work force at the Furnace. They worked as blacksmiths, colliers, founders, and forge men. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of enslaved workers declined, replaced by European immigrants. The Furnace closed in 1903 but the village continued on with workers eventually purchasing the housing.

Per the nomination application, little is known about worker housing at iron plantations with many surviving furnaces having lost their company housing. The worker housing that survives at Catoctin is rare to the State.

#### **4) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria**

The property is also eligible under this category for meeting criteria 6B(2A) as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6B(2) of Frederick County Code:

- 6B(2A): *The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or architecture.*

The Forgerman's House is an example of worker housing associated with the Catoctin Furnace ironworks. It is characterized by its masonry construction, one and a half story height, side-gabled roof, end chimney, and irregular fenestration. The stone walls are laid horizontally in a regular course with irregularly shaped larger stones at the corners. When Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc. purchased the property in 2013, they removed a non-original front porch, added a rear wing of the southeast corner, a rear deck, and replaced the non-historic windows with historically accurate ones. The property retains its integrity and historical significance.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Forgerman's House for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places pursuant to Criterion 6B(1A), 6B(1D), and 6B(2A) as described in Section 1-23-6B of the County Code.

If the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommends the property for local designation, the HPC will submit a letter of recommendation to the County Council for final action.